

Synergizing Logistics Training and Education

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"Synergizing Logistics Training and Education"
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The training and education of logistics officers is the responsibility of two separate commands: Training Command, Logistics Officer Course, Marine Corps Combat Service Support Schools (MCCSSS), and Education Command, the School of MAGTF Logistics (SOML), Marine Corps University. This division of training and education has made it difficult to synergize the professional development of logisticians with the Corps' evolutionary progress in maneuver warfare and logistics modernization efforts. In order to harmonize the career education curriculum for logistics officers should be consolidated under one command. Combining the courses under one command will alleviate gaps in the professional development of logistics officers and will enhance the proficiency in planning and executing logistics operations.

Doctrinal Definitions

The Marine Corps tradition of separating training and education is the result of the doctrinal definitions of training and education and of the organizational structure in support of training and education. Examining the doctrinal definitions as stated in Marine Corps Order (MCO) 1553.1B, *The Marine Corps Training and Education System*. In MCO 1553.1B, training is defined as the conduct of instruction, discipline, or drill; the building in of

information and procedures; and the progressive repetition of tasks- the product of which is skills development and proficiency.¹ Education is defined as the process of moral and mental development; the drawing out of students to initiate the learning process and bring their own interpretations and energies to bear-the product of which is a creative mind.²

With some military occupational specialties (MOS) such as 0302 (infantry officer), the distinction between training and education is clear. Call for fire procedures are standard, and repetition of the task will increase proficiency, thus making it training. The distinction between training and education for a logistics officer tends to bleed over and become more difficult to distinguish. For example, Supporting a battalion attack, a six-hour block of instruction given at the logistics officer course.³ Although considered training, determining logistical requirements actually stimulates creative thinking since supporting a battalion is such a fluid task. So by definition, this training evolution is education.

Structural Organization

The Marine Corps current organizational structure separates training and education. Training and Education Command (TECOM) is responsible for the training and

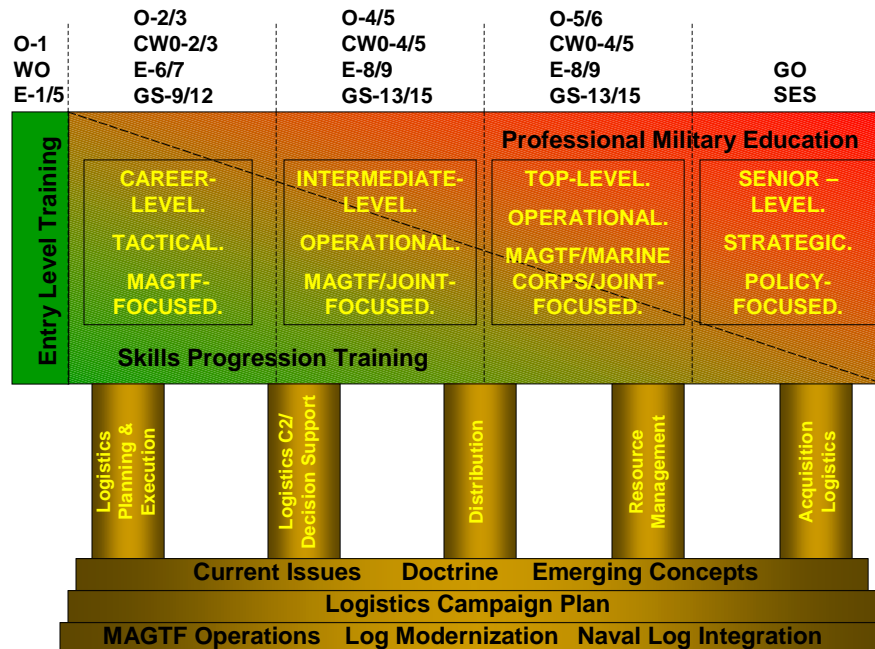
education of logisticians. TECOM mission is to develop, coordinate, resource, execute, and evaluate training and education concepts, policies, plans, and programs to ensure Marines are prepared to meet the challenges of present and future operational environments.⁴ Although responsibility for both training and education falls under one command, in reality, the responsibilities for training and education are divided.

Training falls under the responsibility of Training Command. Training Command's mission is to coordinate, resource, execute, and evaluate training concepts, policies, plans and programs to ensure Marines are trained to a common standard in order to meet the challenges of present and future operational environments.⁵ Under Training Command, The logistics operations school is responsible for the initial training for 0402 logistics officers. The logistics operations school's mission is to "act as the logistics training and education center of excellence and train entry, career and advanced level students in transportation and distribution, motor transport maintenance and combat service support functions for logistics skill sets to effectively support and sustain expeditionary operations across the logistics continuum."⁶

Education Command, also known as Marine Corps University, manages the Corps professional military education (PME). The university's mission is to develop, deliver, and evaluate professional military education and training through resident and distance education programs in order to prepare leaders to meet the challenges of operational environments.⁷ Under Education Command, logistics PME is the responsibility of the School of MAGTF Logistics (SOML). "The School of MAGTF Logistics (SOML) develops, coordinates, integrates, and provides logistics education programs for officer, enlisted, and civilian logisticians in order to prepare them to meet the dynamic logistics challenges of present and future operational environments."⁸ Training Command trains to individual training standards (ITS), putting skill sets to specific MOS's. Where Education Command exposes one to how individual pieces of pie fit into the big picture, giving a clear understanding of how one can apply the skills that have been learned. The schoolhouse trains to ITS standards and not to lessons learned from today's current operations as where education teaches lessons learned from recent and historical operations in order for one to apply that knowledge to be a better logistician.

CURRENT TRAINING AND EDUCATION CONTINUUM

The training and education continuum has been established for logisticians to have the opportunity to receive PME throughout their career. The below chart illustrates the continuum:



Source: School of MAGTF Logistics

The following courses fall throughout this continuum and are the foundation for a logistician's professional development. Upon graduation from the Basic School (TBS), a second lieutenant attends the logistics officer course at Camp Johnson, North Carolina. During this ten-week school, lieutenants receive training in all six functional areas of logistics. This training is based on ITS standards set forth in MCO 1510.61C, *Individual Training Standard (ITS)*

System for Embarkation/ Logistics Occfld 04. The next opportunity, for a senior first lieutenant or captain, is the tactical logistics operations course (TLOC). The purpose of this two-week course, administered by SOML, is to "educate logisticians in tactical-level logistics operations in order to prepare them for command and staff billets within the MAGTF."⁹

The next educational opportunities for logisticians are at the field grade level. The advanced logistics operations course (ALOC) is a three-week course that "focuses on understanding operational and strategic level logistics, and current issues that will help prepare our logisticians to assume active roles at the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) level and above. The course provides insight into Marine Corps and joint logistics areas and their integration into the overall DOD logistics systems."¹⁰ The joint course on logistics is a two-week long, U.S. Army sponsored, course that "focuses on theater-level joint logistics operations by preparing military officers and civilians to function in assignments that involve joint logistics planning, inter-service, multinational logistics support, and joint logistics in a theater of operations."¹¹

The Marine Corps logistics education program (MCLEP) is held in conjunction with Pennsylvania State University (Penn State). This two week course "exposes the student to both proven and emerging Department of Defense and civilian industry best practices in supply chain management in order to enhance the effectiveness of commanders, executive-level logistics managers and staff at the service, components, joint, and Marine expeditionary force levels, and marine air-ground task force staff members operating in the joint environment."¹²

The center of excellence in logistics and technology (LOGTECH) conducts a one-week long course at the University of North Carolina for field grade logisticians. LOGTECH's mission "is to leverage global best practices and explore leading-edge logistics technologies to prepare DoD logisticians for advances that will drive logistics and its supporting technologies in the future."¹³

From the courses listed above, Training Command manages the logistics officers course and Education Command manages the rest. Unfortunately, not all logisticians are afforded the opportunity to attend these PME resident courses due to operational commitments and limited seats.

Benefits Under One Command

With each command designating its respective institutions as centers of excellence, a lack of unity of effort towards synergizing a logistician's professional development exists. Each command has its own philosophy, which is not in line with the other. causing a lack of unity of effort towards synergizing a logistician's professional development. Bringing training and education under one command will benefit logisticians. First and foremost, it would give one command control over both training and education, ensuring that all efforts to align the training and education continuum would be available. It would also establish itself as the sole point of contact for all logistical professional development issues. Alleviating the all too familiar process of calling MCCSSS on an issue, only to be deferred to SOML because it is education related and not training related, and vice versa. One command will guarantee that training and education efforts are in line with current technological advances and evolving warfighting concepts. Ensuring that after action reports from current operations, like Operations ENDURING FREEDOM and IRAQI FREEDOM, are incorporated throughout all levels of logistical training and education.

Conclusion

No one command oversees the different types of instruction that goes on at logistics operations school and SOML. An entity needs to exist to ensure a series of checks and balances occur to ensure that logisticians are receiving the most current information and procedures of logistics operations. By consolidating the efforts that have been put forth by MCCSSS and SOML, units and individuals will have a subject matter expert to assist them in training and education matters as they pertain to the Marine Corps logistician.

¹ MCO 1553.1B, The Marine Corps Training and Education System

² MCO 1553.1B

³ <http://www.lejeune.usmc.mil/mccsss/Files/LOC304.xls>

⁴ <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/>

⁵ <http://www.tecom.usmc.mil/tcom/>

⁶ http://www.lejeune.usmc.mil/mccsss/los_mission_statement.htm

⁷ <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/>

⁸ <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/soml/default.htm>

⁹ <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/SOML/TLOC%20MAIN%20PAGE%20MICKENS.htm>

¹⁰ <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/SOML/ALOC%20MAIN%20PAGE%20MICKENS.htm>

¹¹ <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/SOML/JCL%20MAIN%20PAGE%20MICKENS.htm>

¹² <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/SOML/MCLEP%20MAIN%20PAIG%20MICKENS.htm>

¹³ <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil/SOML/LOGTECH%20MAIN%20PAGE%20MICKENS.htm>

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